

VLR 9/11/02  
NR 11/21/02

(Rev. 10-90)  
NPS Form 10-900

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

### 1. Name of Property

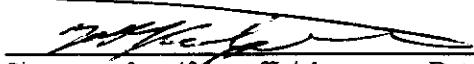
historic name Joseph Bryan Park VA DHR # 127-5677  
other names/site number Young's Pond, Rosewood

### 2. Location

street & number 4308 Hermitage Road not for publication  
city or town Richmond vicinity  
state Virginia code VA County Independent City code 760 Zip 23227

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally X statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

  
Signature of certifying official Date 10/4/02

**Virginia Department of Historic Resources**  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments. )

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:  
entered in the National Register  
See continuation sheet.  
determined eligible for the  
National Register  
See continuation sheet.  
determined not eligible for the National Register  
removed from the National Register  
other (explain):

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

## 5. Classification

**Ownership of Property** (Check as many boxes as apply)

☐ private  
☒ public-local  
☐ public-State  
☐ public-Federal

**Category of Property** (Check only one box)

\_\_\_ building(s)  
X district  
 \_\_\_ site  
 \_\_\_ structure  
 \_\_\_ object

### Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>7</u>	<u>3</u>	buildings
<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>	sites
<u>19</u>	<u>12</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	objects
<u>29</u>	<u>17</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

## 6. Function or Use

**Historic Functions** (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Landscape Sub: Park  
Recreation and Culture Outdoor Recreation

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100	101	102	103	104	105	106	107	108	109	110	111	112	113	114	115	116	117	118	119	120	121	122	123	124	125	126	127	128	129	130	131	132	133	134	135	136	137	138	139	140	141	142	143	144	145	146	147	148	149	150	151	152	153	154	155	156	157	158	159	160	161	162	163	164	165	166	167	168	169	170	171	172	173	174	175	176	177	178	179	180	181	182	183	184	185	186	187	188	189	190	191	192	193	194	195	196	197	198	199	200	201	202	203	204	205	206	207	208	209	210	211	212	213	214	215	216	217	218	219	220	221	222	223	224	225	226	227	228	229	230	231	232	233	234	235	236	237	238	239	240	241	242	243	244	245	246	247	248	249	250	251	252	253	254	255	256	257	258	259	260	261	262	263	264	265	266	267	268	269	270	271	272	273	274	275	276	277	278	279	280	281	282	283	284	285	286	287	288	289	290	291	292	293	294	295	296	297	298	299	300	301	302	303	304	305	306	307	308	309	310	311	312	313	314	315	316	317	318	319	320	321	322	323	324	325	326	327	328	329	330	331	332	333	334	335	336	337	338	339	340	341	342	343	344	345	346	347	348	349	350	351	352	353	354	355	356	357	358	359	360	361	362	363	364	365	366	367	368	369	370	371	372	373	374	375	376	377	378	379	380	381	382	383	384	385	386	387	388	389	390	391	392	393	394	395	396	397	398	399	400	401	402	403	404	405	406	407	408	409	410	411	412	413	414	415	416	417	418	419	420	421	422	423	424	425	426	427	428	429	430	431	432	433	434	435	436	437	438	439	440	441	442	443	444	445	446	447	448	449	450	451	452	453	454	455	456	457	458	459	460	461	462	463
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**Current Functions** (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Landscape Sub: Park  
Recreation and Culture Outdoor Recreation


**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification** (Enter categories from instructions)

Craftsman / Bungalow Cottage

American Rustic

**Materials** (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone, brick

roof Asphalt shingles

walls Wood, brick, stone

other Stone, brought iron, timber trunks, concrete, cast iron, iron chain,  
cobblestones, brick, iron grills, azalea shrubs

**Narrative Description** (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria** (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- ☒ X A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ X C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations** (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☐ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ B removed from its original location.
- ☐ C a birthplace or a grave.
- ☐ D a cemetery.
- ☐ E a reconstructed building, object or structure.
- ☐ F a commemorative property.
- ☐ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance** (Enter categories from instructions)

Landscape Architecture

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Joseph Bryan Park  
Richmond, VA

Period of Significance 1800-1952

Significant Dates 1800

1909

1952

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder Park Bureau, Robert H Harvey, Dept. of Parks and Recreation, City of Richmond  
Emergency Unemployment Relief Fund (City of Richmond), Works Projects Administration (Federal)

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

#### 9. Major Bibliographical References

##### Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

##### Previous documentation on file (NPS)

☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.

☐ previously listed in the National Register

☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register

☐ designated a National Historic Landmark

☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #           

☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #           

##### Primary Location of Additional Data

☒ State Historic Preservation Office

☐ Other State agency

☐ Federal agency

☐ Local government

☐ University

☐ Other

Name of repository: VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HISTORIC RESOURCES

#### 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 262 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing    Zone Easting Northing

1                       2                      

3                       4                      

X            See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)**11. Form Prepared By**name/title: John J Zeugner IV, AICPOrganization: Friends of Bryan Park date 31 May 2002street & number: 6408 Roselawn Road telephone 804-288-5005city or town Richmond, state VA zip code 23226-3115**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets****Maps**

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

**Additional items** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name City of Richmondstreet & number 900 East Broad Street Phone 804-646-7970city or town Richmond state VA zip code 23219

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Joseph Bryan Park  
Richmond, VA

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## 7. Summary Description:

Joseph Bryan Park is a 262-acre public park in Richmond, Virginia, located in the area known as Northside. The park's landscape presents a broad historic panorama, from its late 1700s origins as a plantation and mill site, its role in 1800 as a planning site for Gabriel's Insurrection, its Civil War history, and its evolution as a rural estate/ working farm called "Rosewood", owned by the Mordecai family (1835-1909).

In 1909, Belle Stewart Bryan donated the property to the City to memorialize her husband, Joseph Bryan, a prominent Richmond citizen. Reflecting the "City Beautiful" movement, and the National Park Service's "rustic" aesthetic, the City transformed the property into an English Naturalistic-style landscape, featuring a diversity of resources: ponds, dams, waterfalls, streams, ravines, rolling hills, carriage roads, open space, and 100 acres of woods. A memorial gateway and park buildings were built at this time.

Additional park structures and improvements were made during the auto-tourism boom of the 1920s. During the Depression, more public works projects and structures were added. In 1952, a 17-acre azalea garden, which once held statewide significance, was begun.

Bryan Park's historic fabric is largely intact, revealing two centuries of landscape evolution, important history and sites, and two-dozen historic buildings and structures.

### Site Location and Boundaries

Joseph Bryan Park is an urban park in Richmond's Northside. The park is located just north of the Interstate Interchange of I-95, I-64, and the northern terminus of I-195 (Powhite Expressway).

About half of the park's current boundaries consists of Interstate right of ways: I-95 on its lower eastern edge, access ramps to I-64 along its southern edge, and I-64 along its western edge. A wedge-shaped 32.4-acre parcel in the upper western portion of Bryan Park is in Henrico County, though it is owned by the City of Richmond.

The site's northern boundary is Bryan Park Avenue, a residential street. The site's upper east boundary is Hermitage Avenue.

### General Site Description

The park, situated in the geophysical fall zone of the Chickahominy River watershed, presents a rich diversity of landscape features. Three streams converge in the park: Upham Brook, Jordans Branch, and Princeton Creek. In the Park's northern portion, two large ponds run west to east. At the eastern end of the lower pond is a dam/causeway on the site of the former Young's Millpond.

Beyond this lower pond dam is a 15 foot-drop waterfall; falling water cascades into the streambed of Upham Brook, which consists of large, rounded granite boulders and bedrock. Upham Brook runs eastward to the northeast edge of the Park, where it exits beneath the Hermitage Avenue Bridge into Henrico County.

The central and southern portions of the park are relatively high and flat, like a plateau. The central open area has been developed as a soccer complex; the southeastern part of Bryan Park contains its once-famous Azalea Gardens. The western portion of the park is heavily wooded, bisected by the Jordans Branch ravine, which slopes south to north, emptying into Upper Young's Pond. The northwestern part of the park, where Upham Brook flows into Bryan Park, is a gently-sloping floodplain containing wetlands. Along the park's northern boundary are three blocks of the Bryan Parkway neighborhood, comprised of residences built from the 1920s onward. Two hundred feet west of the intersection of Bryan Park Avenue and Hermitage Road, on the northern bank of Upham Brook, is the location of Young's Spring.

The main entrance to Bryan Park is from Hermitage Road. One enters the park by passing through a large memorial gateway, dedicated to Joseph Bryan in 1912. Just inside the

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gate stands the 1911 Gatekeeper's House. From here, the main road follows the original farm road into what was the nineteenth century estate called Rosewood. At Princeton Creek, the road splits; to the right, running north, is a road that leads to the millpond and other former structures. This road continues around in a circle, up the hill to the west side of the Gatekeeper's House. The other road at the split crosses Princeton Creek and winds up the hill to the former location of "Rosewood" (the two-story residence built by Augustus Mordecai after 1835) near where the Camp House now stands.

At the top of the hill, a divided-lane road takes a left, heading south towards Shelter #3. The main road continues west to Shelter #1, following the old farm road network. A larger park loop road was constructed during the 1920s, and in 1925, a causeway was built in order to create an upper Young's Pond. Depression-era public works projects expanded the road network to that which is found in Bryan Park today.

The southern and western portions of Bryan Park remain thickly wooded, with woodland trails. Beginning in 1952, the City developed 17 acres of the southeast part of the park as an Azalea Garden, and in 1960, a pond and fountain were added.

Three transportation projects altered the original boundaries of the park. The first was a small land swap with the R, F & P Railroad in 1943. In the mid-1950s, the Richmond-Petersburg Turnpike Authority condemned approximately 16 acres along the park's eastern edge, which necessitated relocating the Park's original Entrance Gateway and reconfiguring it for modern traffic. In the late 1960s, seventeen acres of the park's south and western property were condemned and acquired for the construction of I-64. In 1969, a wedge-shaped 32.4 acre parcel in Henrico County, adjacent to the western portion of Bryan Park, was purchased for the park.

### **Background on the Bryan Park Historical District-- Landscape Evolution:**

In the late 1700s, the park site was part of a 558-acre plantation/ estate known as "Westbrook", owned by William Young. The western portion of the estate (now Bryan Park) contained a mill and millpond, and was known as Young's Pond. In 1832, Augustus Mordecai married William Young's only daughter Rosina, and built a home and working farm on the western portion she had inherited, calling it "Rosewood" in her honor.

The site's topography still reveals its early origins; Bryan Park's layout is founded on the Rosewood estate's original road network, farming areas, and water features. On Young's Pond, the millpond, dam, and lower streambed make it easy to visualize the site of two centuries ago. Vestiges of old farm roads can be found throughout the Park. The high, flat central plateau, now containing soccer fields, once was used for farming and pasture. In the back parts of the park, the streams, ravines, and deep woods seem untouched by change.

In 1909, Rosewood was sold at an auction and given to the City of Richmond as a memorial park to commemorate Joseph Bryan. From 1909 to 1912, the City transformed the estate into a public park, revealing the strong influence of the "City Beautiful" movement, the first important movement in American City planning. The park's landscape style can be classified as "English naturalistic"; this style manifested by vistas of grassy hills, large specimen trees and groves, picturesque ponds and streams, winding carriage trails, and wooded areas. Structures, roads and trails, fixtures and furnishings reflected the "rustic aesthetic" utilized by the National Park Service for its major parks in the early twentieth century. "The goal of the Park Bureau was to establish a naturalistic landscape that afforded visitors a retreat from the City." (City Annual Report, 1918)

Between 1910 and 1912, the City erected a large entrance gateway to memorialize Joseph Bryan, constructed the Gatekeepers House, and worked on improving pathways, trees, and groves. Over the next forty years rustic picnic shelters, elegant concrete bridges, camping and dormitory facilities were built and roadway improvements, tree planting, and landscaping were undertaken.

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Joseph Bryan Park  
Richmond, VA

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## Architectural Analysis

### Contributing Historic Sites

#### **Young's Pond Millpond and Ice Storage Pit**

On Upham Brook, a corn gristmill and millpond were developed in the late 1700s, which became the primary economic engine for the property. Young's Pond became a rural center for commerce, trade, society and leisure. It is shown on the 1815 plat of William Young's property. (Henrico Plat Book 1:5) Today, the flat area on the southern side of the dam is probably the mill site; to the east can be seen vague remains of an access road.

Ice harvesting began in the millpond area in the early 1800s. In 1835, Rosina Ursula Young was wed to Augustus Mordecai, a neighbor. Mordecai expanded the Young's Pond ice business. By 1846, using ice pits, storage and processing buildings on the site, he had the largest ice business in the city. In the wooded hill just southeast of the dam, a 20 foot-wide depression still shows where the ice was stored.

#### **Young's Spring – Site of planning for Gabriel's Insurrection**

Between Young's Millpond and the current location of Lakeside Avenue, on the north bank of Upham Brook, was a natural freshwater spring known as Young's Spring. It is visible on the 1835 Map of Westbrook (Henrico Plat Book 5:156).

In 1800, at this location, the slave Gabriel met with other slaves to plan an armed insurrection described by the historian Virginius Dabney as "the greatest slave plot in US History". A recent archeological investigation concludes that Young's Spring is in Bryan Park, though apparently hidden by drainage alterations (McLearn, 3). Based on an examination of the topography around the intersection at Buckingham Avenue and Bryan Park Avenue, and assessing probable groundwater flows, it is clear that the spring is located just south of the intersection. Today, groundwater seepage and soil slumping in this location, on the northern bank of Upham Brook just ten feet south of this intersection, reveals Young's Spring's discharge into Upham Brook, in Bryan Park.

#### **Bryan Park Azalea Gardens**

In the late 1940s, Robert H. Harvey was the Superintendent of Grounds and Structures for the City's Department of Parks and Recreation. Harvey was an energetic, charismatic, even visionary man, keenly interested in landscaping and gardening.

In 1949, he began an azalea garden in Forest Hill Park (in Richmond's Southside), but found that conditions were unfavorable there. He then considered Bryan Park, and found the swampy soils in the southern portion of the park ideal for his vision of a huge azalea garden. The entire gardens was designed by Harvey and the first actual plantings occurred in 1952. Over the next fifteen years he transformed 17 acres by planting some 50,000 azaleas, landscaping paths, and grassy glades. In 1960, he created a dramatic focal point for the eastern part of the garden, by building a large oval pond lined with coursed granite walls. In its center was a large spray fountain; over the small spillway a rustic bridge/walkway was constructed. The surrounding area was planted intensively with azaleas, while a large azalea bed, composed of red and white azaleas in the form of a cross, was developed on a nearby hillside.

In its prime, the Bryan Park Azalea Gardens attracted as many as 400,000 visitors a year, and was well known throughout the state.



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### **Contributing Buildings**

#### **Gatekeeper's House:**

Just inside Bryan Park's entrance gateway is the Gatekeeper's House, constructed by the City of Richmond in 1911. This two-story Craftsman-style cottage is visually distinctive. A large pyramidal roof dominates the house, overhangs the porch, and wraps around the three sides of the front of the building. The house is constructed on stone foundations, with brick piers to support the front porch. The house is a wood-frame structure.

The house was originally a square with four rooms on the ground floor. An addition was made to the north side of the house to accommodate a kitchen and another room, at an unknown date. The front of the house (south elevation) is asymmetrical in its design and features an entrance door, offset left of center, flanked by three windows (one to the west of the door, two to the east). All the windows on the front of the house are six-over-six pane sash windows. There are three additional entrances to the building; two entrances on the west and north elevations lead directly into the addition. The other entrance on the east elevation leads into the northeast room and the kitchen addition. Around the east, west, and north elevations of the house on the ground floor are a total of twelve windows. Ten windows have six-over-six panes, one has four-over-four panes, and one has eight-over-eight panes. Above the front door, which is offset west of center, is a small, three-pane transom window.

The wraparound porch begins and ends on the east and west side of the addition. Twelve wooden porch columns support the roof (six on the front, two on the west, four on the east). The roof is a steeply pitched hipped roof, supported by brackets, with an east-west ridge. There are six gabled-dormer windows on the second floor. On the roof's north and south sides, the pairs of window gables are prominent, each partially recessed within the roof. The windows are casement windows with six-over-six panes. There are only single dormer-windows on the east and west sides of the house. There are two corbelled-brick chimneystacks, oriented asymmetrically relative to the roof-ridge, which add visual play to the tall roof. One is located in the original northeast room. The other is located in the northwest room of the addition.

Where the roof overhangs the wrap-around porch, the eaves terminate with a subtle upswing. At the top of the porch columns, the capitals consist of flat faceplates, flaring sideways and outward, gracefully complimenting the outward flair of the roof eaves.

The house interior is fairly utilitarian: wood-framed, plaster-and-lathe walls, undecorated wood trim surrounding wall-openings and window frames. A fireplace and mantel remains in the main entrance room. The original foursquare room layout has been altered; a new wall has been added at the bottom of the interior stair. The interior stairway is intact: a curved wood railing, with newel posts and turned spindles. Upstairs, the gable bedrooms and bathroom have undergone minor modifications. Throughout the building, the floors and much of the original woodwork, doors, and fixtures are intact.

#### **Gatekeeper's Garage**

Directly behind the Gatekeeper's House is a stone garage constructed by the Works Projects Administration and Park Bureau workforce in 1933. (The date 1933 is inscribed in concrete on the top surface of the south side-wall.) The garage is a one-story building with a high loft, made out of rough-cut granite, placed in irregular courses. The recently-replaced gambrel roof overhangs both the north and south ends. There is a hinged-door leading into the garage ground floor on the south elevation, and a second-floor door at attic-height on the north elevation. A four-pane window is above the door on the south gable-end, its lower sill is accentuated by different-sized ashlar stones.

The two garage doors on the west elevation have been recently replaced.

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**Stone Comfort Station** (located downhill from Gatekeeper's Garage)

**Stone Comfort Station** (located near tennis courts close to Shelter #1)

The Works Projects Administration and Park Bureau workforce built both buildings in 1933. Both buildings are rectangular in shape and are topped by an overhanging hipped-roof, supported by brackets. The stone is rough-cut granite and is laid in irregular rows. There are entrance doors on the north and south ends. There are two window openings on the east and west sides. Originally they might have contained small windows, but are currently filled by wood louvers. They also have lower sills accentuated by different-sized ashlar stones.

The comfort station near the Gatekeeper's House is closed to the public and the interior could not be surveyed. The one near the tennis courts is also closed; until recently, it was used for storage.

**Camp House (Stone House)**

The Park Bureau built the Camp House (also known as the Stone House) in 1922, for \$6,200, in order to accommodate the growing demands of auto-tourists. It is rectangular in shape, was constructed out of Durax Block, and originally featured a tile roof. The present roof is a low pitched, center-gable design, which overhangs on the east and west sides. The main entrance is on the building's western side.

The west elevation is symmetrical, with a central door topped with a wooden pediment, supported by brackets. On either side of the door are two sash windows with six-over-six panes. The windows are currently covered with wooden shutters with iron handmade hinges. The east elevation includes an exterior brick chimneystack, a wooden lumber storage area, and one sash window with six-over-six panes on the south side of the chimney. The north elevation has two doors leading into the men and women's toilet areas. The south side has a door flanked by two windows of six over six panes. Wooden shutters cover all the windows on the west and south sides. Above and below all windows are stone lintels.

The main entrance on the west side leads directly into the "library" area. This is an open space with a brick fireplace on the east wall. The fireplace is topped by a brick mantle and has hand-made iron andirons permanently attached. On the north wall are two entrances into the men and women's toilet areas. On the south wall are two doors leading into two rooms. These rooms were used as a dormitory by the women auto-tourists during inclement weather. Two walls of each room are wood with wainscoting, and the other two are constructed of Durax block. There is an opening between the two rooms, which originally held a window, as indicated by the nail holes. (Measured drawings on file at VADHR)

**Shelter # 1 and Shelter #3**

Two large picnic shelters were constructed in 1935 by the Works Projects Administration; Shelter # 1, overlooking the upper pond, was intended for whites, with bathroom facilities nearby. Shelter # 3, in the eastern portion of the park, was intended for "colored".

The overall dimensions of these two structures are 25' x 51' x 18'. Shelters # 1 and # 3 were constructed of brick, rustic frame, and Johns Manville asbestos shingle (since replaced with asphalt shingles). A side-facing gable roof, overhanging with exposed rafter-tails, covers these rectangular buildings. The three center bays of the five-bay building are open on each side; each pair of the two support columns are intentionally rustic: rough-hewn trunks of trees, stripped of bark, with knots and tree ribs visible. Inside the shelter, the heavy-timber framing of the king-post trusses is revealed.

The end bays are part of a large U-shaped brick structure, capping the ends of the simple ridge-roof. A massive chimney anchors the center of each of the U-structures. The chimneys are external and include decorative details of rough-cut granite, inserted at random intervals on the outside. The fireplaces feature brick mantels and built-in iron andirons. The fireplaces measure 5' wide, 30" deep, and 27" high. Each end bay features windowless rectangular openings that

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are flanked by decorative wooden shutters, located on either side of the chimney and on each side wall of the U-structure. Wood batten blinds are on the eight windows. The metal catches and hinges for the blinds are handmade.

The floor is made of poured concrete 6" thick. The floor is edged with an 8" brick border. Originally, timber picnic tables were provided, and covered boxes were constructed along the inside wall to seat 48 people. They have been removed and replaced with metal picnic tables. (Copies of Construction Drawings on file at VADHR)

### Contributing Structures

#### **Stone Memorial Gateway**

The City of Richmond constructed the original commemorative entranceway in 1912. The large, triple-arch gateway was constructed of sized, coursed, and mortared rough-hewn ashlar granite blocks. It's larger, central semi-circular arch was tall and narrow (12 feet, 4 inches wide). A pair of smaller, narrower arches, intended for pedestrians, flanked this larger arch on either side. A capstone cornice of rough-hewn granite unified the ensemble of three arches. The two central piers and the two flanking granite piers had prominent granite imposts about seven feet high, with rectangular plinths at the base of each pier.

On the voussoirs of the rough-hewn central arch, was a continuous, curved panel of smooth-finished granite, on which was written JOSEPH BRYAN PARK in raised lettering. The central arched-entranceway held a large, ornamental, wrought-iron gate, divided into two symmetrical halves. Each of the two smaller pedestrian gates held a smaller, similar, wrought-iron gate. Each of the two piers of the central arch held large bronze plaques, describing the Bryan family's gift and the City Council's gratitude.

This memorial gateway was flanked with two low ashlar granite flanking walls, which, in plan, swept forward in semi-circles. The outer ends of each of these two flanking walls were terminated in larger granite abutments, complete with capstone cornice and enlarged plinth bases. The semi-circular walls were level and capped by a run of rough-cut rectangular cornice stones. Four or five feet before it joined the gateway ensemble, each wall angled up in a slight rise. Its total cost, then, was \$5,000.

The original entrance was located at the convergence of Westbrook Avenue and Hermitage Road. As a result of the Richmond-Petersburg Turnpike Authority taking 16 acres of the park in 1952, it was necessary to relocate the park entranceway. The gateway was disassembled and moved southwest, nearer the Gatekeeper's House. The new gateway configuration did not employ arches but was instead a large post-and-lintel rectangular frame, 14 feet tall and 24 feet wide. Two large stone piers support the lintel, with two pairs of shorter, identical flanking piers on either side, arranged in a straight-line. The present gateway is constructed out of stones salvaged from the original gate.

The central lintel contains 3 I-beams and "poured in place" concrete. It is faced with granite stone, with a central concrete panel in which the words JOSEPH BRYAN PARK are incised. The lintel has a concrete cornice and lower architrave. The vertical piers are faced with rough-cut coursed granite blocks (core unknown).

Two pairs of shorter granite piers flank each side of the central gateway. The two original bronze plaques have been attached to the piers between the larger central piers and the ones at each end. The two large ornamental wrought-iron gates, once in the original central arch, are now mounted on the piers between the central lintel piers and the adjacent flanking piers. The wrought-iron gates originally in the pedestrian arches have been reused between the middle piers and the end piers. They are mounted on hinges, to swing open, but both small gates are locked.

This reconstructed entrance gateway was construction by the Richmond-Petersburg Turnpike Authority between 1956 and 1958; the cost was \$27,000.

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It should be noted that granite blocks from the gate's three curved arches, including those containing the letters of JOSEPH BRYAN PARK have been stockpiled in the center of the park. This area is shown on Sketch map # B.

#### **Dam/Causeway on Lower Young's Pond**

The current dam is constructed on the original location of a millpond dam built in the late 1700s. It was the power source for a gristmill and sawmill. Ice-harvesting facilities and ice-pits were also nearby. The dam may have been reconstructed several times. The WPA workforce and the City's Park Bureau constructed the existing reinforced-concrete causeway and dam in 1937. The concrete post and chain side railings date from 1958-1959.

#### **Dam/Spillway/Causeway on Upper Young's Pond**

The Bryan Park Realty Corporation began construction of the upper pond in 1925 to improve the prospects of selling new lakefront houses in the westward portion of the Bryan Parkway neighborhood. The dam and spillway were constructed of concrete, rock, and earth infill, and completed in 1926. However, in 1929, a hurricane's floodwaters proved too strong for the structure. Under the WPA workforce, additional concrete reinforcing walls were poured in 1935 and the upper pond was further excavated and cleared of tree trunks and submerged debris. The concrete post and steel cable side railings probably date from park improvements in the 1950s-1960s.

#### **Auto Bridge over Princeton Creek**

This bridge was constructed in 1929 by the Park Bureau, and made of poured in-place reinforced concrete, it includes poured in-place side railings comprised of abutments, piers, and balusters with a railing cap. The underside of the bridge displays a graceful broad arch.

#### **Auto Bridge over Jordans Branch**

This bridge was constructed in 1936 by the WPA workforce, and made of poured in-place, reinforced concrete. It too includes poured in-place side railings comprised of piers, balusters with railing caps, and end abutments. Four cast-iron light stanchions, each topped with glass globes, stand on the end abutments. The underside of the bridge displays a graceful broad, slightly pointed arch.

#### **Open Cooking Hearths:**

Approximately 15 of these structures were constructed from 1935 to the early 1950s. They tend to be clustered near the shelters and other picnic areas. Several are located adjacent to granite outcroppings and are integrated into the landscape. Several others, such as those built on sloped hillsides, include granite retaining walls and landscaping.

The 13 cooking hearths remaining are constructed of coursed granite and firebrick from the lower gas works and ordinary building materials salvaged from the Marshall Reservoir. The overall dimensions are 3'6" x 5'4" on a base of solid construction 18" above the ground line. The firebox is 20" x 33" x 18" and holds three ¾" gratebars for cooking located 4" above the bottom of the box. The flue is 7" x 13" and is lined with 12" x 12" x 4" firebrick. The base of the flue is 8" above the bottom of the firebox.

#### **Park Road System, Curb and Guttering, Sidewalks, etc.**

Many sections of Bryan Park's roadway system include granite cobblestone curb and guttering, and other areas of the Park contain granite retaining walls and stormwater management structures (the best example is near the Princeton Creek picnic area). Similarly, old brink sidewalks and walkways can be found around many of the Park's buildings and structures.

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**LIST OF CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES:**

Sites

1. Young's Pond Millpond and Ice storage pit - late 1700s, early 1800s
2. Young's Spring – prehistoric, Gabriel's Insurrection, 1800.
3. Bryan Park Azalea Gardens - 1950s-1960s

Buildings

1. Gatekeeper's House - 1911
2. Gatekeeper's Garage - 1933
3. Stone Comfort Station (behind Gatekeeper's Garage) - 1933
4. Stone Comfort Station (near shelter #1) - 1933
5. Camp House (Stone House)- 1922
6. Shelter #1 – 1935
7. Shelter #3 - 1935

Structures

1. Stone Memorial Gateway - 1912, modified 1956-8
2. Dam/Causeway on Lower Young's Pond - 1937
3. Dam/Causeway on Upper Young's Pond - 1925-6
4. Auto Bridge over Princeton Creek - 1929
5. Auto Bridge over Jordan's Branch - 1936
- 6-18. Thirteen Open Cooking Hearths – 1935-1950s
19. Misc. Curb, Guttering, Walls, Sidewalks, etc. - 1911-1950s

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### **Noncontributing Resources**

The noncontributing resources at the park include Shelter #2, a brick restroom built by the City of Richmond in the 1970s, a cinderblock restroom near the Shelter #1, tennis courts built by the City of Richmond in the 1950s, two pairs of tennis courts, a playground, and a soccer complex comprised of six soccer fields.

Shelter #2 was constructed along the same plans as Shelters 1 and 3, but was constructed in 1957. The overall dimensions are the same. Shelter #2 does not have the rustic frame supporting the roof as in Shelters #1 & #3. The wooden roof is supported in the open bays by straight wooden supports, not tree trunks. Shelter #2 also includes the rough-cut granite details in its exterior chimney. It is also roofed with asphalt shingles at this time and contains metal picnic tables.

### **LIST OF NON-CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES:**

#### **Sites**

1. CVSA Soccer Complex

#### **Buildings**

1. Shelter #2
2. Brick bathrooms, Shelter #2
3. Cinder block bathroom, near Shelter #1

#### **Structures**

1. Friends of Bryan Park Playground
2. Bellevue R-PTA Bridge
3. Miscellaneous small wood bridges (2)
4. Boy Scout Fire Pit (1950s, 1960s)
5. Miscellaneous Brick sidewalks, Constructed in 1950s, 1960s, 1970s).
6. Meadow Kiosk (2001)
7. Meadow Observation Mound (2001)
8. A pair of tennis courts, near Camp House
9. A pair of tennis courts, near Shelter #1

#### **Objects**

1. Harvey Azalea Gardens Memorial Marker (boulder) (1998)

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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Summary of Significance

Joseph Bryan Park is significant under National Register Criterion C for its two centuries of landscape evolution. In the 1800s, it was the plantation/working farm of the Mordecais, called "Rosewood", with its own rich history. More importantly, in 1909, the property was given to the City of Richmond, Virginia, as a memorial Park to honor Joseph Bryan, publisher of the Richmond Times.

Richmond's Public Park system, begun in 1851, was a model for other American cities. This gift of 262 acres came when the City Beautiful movement permeated urban planning. Within three years the estate was transformed into a commemorative park, closely adhering to Rosewood's 19<sup>th</sup> century layout, character, and spirit of place. A memorial entrance gateway and other Craftsman and rustic-style park structures were built then.

Bryan Park is significant for several building periods: the 1920s and its development as an auto-tourist camp; the 1930s and its public work programs and projects; and in the early 1950s, with the development of its Azalea Gardens.

Joseph Bryan Park is also significant under Criterion A "Ethnic Heritage" for its association with Gabriel's Insurrection, an attempted slave rebellion in 1800. Meetings for the rebellion took place at Young's Spring, located in Bryan Park.

### Statement of Significance

#### Historical Background and Significance

Native Americans first moved into the Bryan Park area before the Late Woodlands period (1,000 CE to European Contact). Native American artifacts, such as arrowhead points and pottery fragments, have been found in the park.

In the late 1700s, these rural lands, about three miles north of Richmond, were divided into large plantations. Today's Bryan Park site was initially part of a 558-acre estate called "Westbrook" owned by William Young. There the Youngs built a large house, called "Westbrook", on the eastern portion of the property. The western portion, with its lake, became known as Young's Pond. There, the Youngs had built a dam, millpond, and gristmill. Adjacent to Westbrook, just north of Bryan Park, was a 400-acre holding called as Spring Farm (also known as Bloomingdale). Further to the east stood "Brook Hill", the Stewart's large estate. Further north stood Brookfield Plantation, owned by Thomas Prosser.

In 1800, a slave rebellion had its origins in Bryan Park. Part of the planning for this plot, known as Gabriel's Insurrection, took place at Young's Spring, which is located in the northeast corner of Bryan Park. The Spring's discharge has been diminished due to drainage alterations, but its location is clear. It is on the north bank of Upham Brook, east of Young's Pond dam and west of Lakeside Avenue.

By the summer of 1800, the country was adrift; the young nation was still unsettled, Washington had recently died, and there was much talk of freedom among slaves and indentured workers. In Virginia, by this time, some slave-owners allowed certain of their skilled slaves to hire-out their talents for other jobs, for various lengths of time, thus enhancing their thirst for freedom. All workers and slaves were given Sundays off, and many slaves in the area would often gather at Young's Spring on that Sundays for "preachments, fish-feasts, and barbecue." The gristmill, the millpond, the rounded rocks below the millpond dam, and streams and wooded areas were well known and frequently visited, for business and pleasure." (Boehling, 35)

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Gabriel was a tall, strong, intelligent slave belonging to the Prossers of Brookfield Plantation, who often attended these gatherings at Young's Spring. During that summer, amidst the talk of freedom and rebellion, an insurrection plot was developed and he was appointed the leader. The objective of the rebellion was to overtake the State Capitol and convince Governor James Monroe to support more political, social, and economic equality between members of society. Gabriel recruited slaves, white artisans, freemen, religious supporters, and French sympathizers who supported the ideals of the rebellion.

The leaders planned for the assault to begin on the evening of August 30, 1800. Slaves from the neighboring counties were to meet north of Brook Bridge on Brook Road. In order to assure secrecy, the slaves planned to kill the plantation owners in the area. The rebels were then to march to Richmond and meet other rebels from Petersburg.

Once all the supporters were assembled in Richmond, one band was to secure Mayo's Bridge and set fire to Rocketts, a warehouse district in Richmond, to serve as a diversion for the militia. The second band was to capture the State Capitol and kidnap Governor Monroe and persuade him to accept their demands.

The rebellion failed. There were massive thunderstorms in the area that washed out the bridge at Brook Road, making the crossing impossible. The rebels rescheduled the raid for the next night. By then, two slaves from Meadow Farm plantation informed their owner, Mosby Sheppard, of the plot. Sheppard informed Monroe, who called out the militia to protect the capital.

Gabriel escaped down the Chickahominy River to Norfolk where he was caught on September 23, 1800. He was returned to Richmond where he was imprisoned, tried and convicted of conspiracy, along with 20 other slaves. Gabriel was hung on the gallows on October 10, 1800.

After these events, the Youngs expanded their businesses by building a sawmill and an icehouse. In 1819, they acquired a new neighbor. Jacob Mordecai was a fairly prosperous merchant in Richmond. Jacob had married Judith Meyers of New York in 1784, but she died in 1796, leaving six small children. In 1798, Jacob Mordecai married Rebecca Meyers, a half sister of his first wife. They had seven more children, and lived in Goochland, Richmond, and Petersburg, VA, and moved to Warrenton, NC, in 1792.

In 1809, Jacob Mordecai opened "a school for girls with teaching done by his older children... The school enjoyed a wide repute and ...flourished until November 1818 when it was sold, the Mordecai's ...profit (ing) ...some \$40,000 from their schoolteaching." (MacDonald, 325)

"They purchased the 400-acre Spring Farm to which they removed in 1819." They became very close friends with their neighbors, the Youngs. Unfortunately, by 1827, the Mordecai's various investments declined; and the family lost most of its wealth. In 1832, Spring Farm, which had never been profitable, was sold and the family, together with some of the slaves, moved to Church Hill. (MacDonald, 325)

Augustus Mordecai (5 October 1806-25 July 1847), the fourth child from the second marriage, received his early education in Warrenton, NC. After spending a few years in the early 1820s with two brothers in Raleigh, Augustus returned to Spring Farm where, as his father grew older, he took charge of the farming operations. Ties between the Mordecais and Youngs remained strong even after Jacob Mordecai moved to the city. Jacob Mordecai's youngest child Laura and the Young's only daughter Rosina were great friends, and John Brooke Young and Laura's brother Augustus were also friends. (Boehling, 36)

At Westbrook, William Young died in 1832. "Under the provisions of their father's will, Westbrook was to be divided between John and Rosina. John inherited the family home and 279 acres east of the Hermitage Road. Rosina received 279 acres on the western portion of the property which included the



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mill pond, ice house, saw mill, and grist mill. John retained the right to use the mills and to get ice." (Boehling, 37)

In March 1835, Augustus Mordecai married Rosina Ursula Young. First, the young Mordecai family moved to a farm near Raleigh. After a few years, they returned to ... Young's Pond. Augustus built a home on his property and named it "Rosewood", in honor of his wife. (Boehling, 1989:37)

Augustus entered the ice business, with ice cut from the pond and sold in Richmond. He also constructed two more icehouses, and by 1846, had the largest ice storage plant in Virginia. With Rosina, they had numerous children, four of whom lived beyond childhood: John Young Mordecai (1836-1900); John Brooke Mordecai (1839-1873); George Washington Mordecai (1844-1920); and daughter Augusta Mordecai (September 30, 1847-February 5, 1939). (MacDonald, 333)

Augustus Mordecai died in 1847 at age 41. Rosina and the children continued to live at Rosewood, working the farm with slave labor. When the Civil War began, Rosina's three sons enlisted in the Richmond Howitzers. Rosina and daughter Augusta remained at Rosewood.

From 1862 to 1864, the Confederacy constructed the Outer Line of Defense along the ridge of Westbrook, over into Rosewood, and four miles further west. The Nathaniel Michler Map, a Union survey of 1867, shows the Rosewood area clearly, including the Mordecai House. It shows numerous Confederate fortifications -- apparently artillery positions -- constructed south of and above Upham Brook, and north and southwest of Young's Pond.

Three times Rosewood was the camping ground of troops. Early in the war, Gen. W H F (Rooney) Lee had his headquarters at the house (Rosewood) and the pond. In June 1862, 1200 of Stuart's men were encamped at Rosewood. GW Beale's A Lieutenant of Calvary in Lee's Army describes General J E B Stuart's escapades in the groves near the Mordecai residence. The Georgia Infantry made their winter quarters in the pine woods between the house and R, F & P Railroad.

Rosina continued to live at Rosewood until her death on April 4, 1906, at the age of 88. Financial problems continued to plague her until the end of her life. In her will, she directed her executors, "as soon as it can be done, to sell my farm Rosewood, on which I now reside, and after the payment of my debts and my funeral expenses to divide the residue equally between my three children." (Boehling, 50) Rosewood was offered for sale at public auction on June 12, 1909. It was purchased by Samuel T. Morgan and Thomas C. Williams, Jr for \$29,000, who then sold the property to Belle Stewart Bryan for "\$10 and other valuable considerations." Mrs. Belle Bryan, along with her sons, presented the 262 acres to the City of Richmond as a memorial to her husband Joseph Bryan. The City Council officially accepted the property and dedicated it to Joseph Bryan on December 20, 1909. (Boehling, 51)

It is not difficult to understand the significance of the memorial gift to the families involved. Most of the prominent Northside Richmond families had been close before and after the Civil War. The Stewarts of Brook Hill were neighbors and friends of the Mordecais of Rosewood. In 1871, the publisher of the Richmond Times, Joseph Bryan, married Isobel Lamont (Belle) Stewart of Brook Hill.

Joseph Bryan, one of Richmond's most esteemed citizens, was born in 1845 in Gloucester County, Virginia. He attended the University of Virginia, enlisted with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Company, Richmond Howitzers, and was twice wounded in action. Following the Civil War, he returned to the University and practiced law in Fluvanna County. In 1871, Bryan returned to the Richmond area to practice law and marry Belle Stewart. They resided at Brook Hill.

In 1883, Joseph Bryan bought the land known as "Laburnum" on Brook Turnpike, south of Brook Hill. There he built a grand Victorian home, and extensively landscaped the grounds. Following a fire in 1906, Bryan rebuilt "Laburnum" as a brick mansion, finished in January 1908.

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Joseph Bryan "was one of the notable citizens of Virginia in his time, was conspicuous as a gentleman of wide business interests, ...and a leader in the city's cultural activities. His wife was one of the most beloved women of her generation in Virginia." (Munford, 113)

Joseph Bryan died on November 20, 1908. The following year, Belle Bryan and sons purchased "Rosewood" for the express purpose of creating a memorial to Joseph Bryan. She placed two provisions in the deed: "The said property hereby conveyed to be improved, beautified, used and maintained for park purposes..." and that the Park was to be used, in perpetuity, "as a free park for the use and benefit of all its citizens".

It is important to understand that northside Richmond and the Lakeside area, was still mostly undeveloped around 1910. Most of the City's residential areas went no further than the Victorian Ginter Park. Bryan Park was located in rural Henrico County. A trolley-line extended from downtown north to the Lakeside quarries and the Lakeside Amusement Park, while new housing subdivisions, such as Bloomingdale, were still in the planning stages. (Ironically, Joseph Bryan had been involved with the Richmond Trolley Company since the 1880s and the development of its trolley-oriented neighborhoods).

Thus, with the 1909 gift of a large park to the City's already prominent public park system, begins a new chapter of Joseph Bryan Park's history. The planning and design of American Cities was under the influence of the "City Beautiful" movement. This first, widespread impulse towards urban planning arose from the Chicago World's Fair of 1893, and its "White City" urban prototype. Chief proponent of the City Beautiful movement was Daniel Burnham, the architect of the Chicago World's Fair. His magic words, "make no small plans", marked the new era. A wave of enthusiasm for civic planning and beautification swept the country". (Wittick, 1092)

"It started a tidal wave of City Planning..." Every City planned to become the City Beautiful. Most of the City Beautiful efforts were concentrated in city centers, transforming the 'cramped, monotonous and ugly' to be 'big, broad, and beautiful'. Great plazas and broad avenues, generously punctuated with monuments, were almost a civic obsession." (Gallion, 1961:81). In 1901, the City Beautiful movement motivated McMillan to direct the renewal of L'Enfant's Plan for Washington DC's, which must have been studied by Richmond's civic leaders and planners.

In keeping with the City Beautiful movement's love of grand avenues, Hermitage Road was upgraded to create an impressive approach to the city's prosperous Northside. Similarly, grand avenues need to be terminated by a large monument, so the City of Richmond determined to erect a large memorial entrance gateway to Joseph Bryan at the intersection of Hermitage Road with Westbrook Avenue.

As for Bryan Park's landscaping, Richmond Park planners chose the "English Naturalistic" style, which was still very popular at this time. The National Park Service was promoting this natural landscape aesthetic as it developed parks across the continent. "The design fulfilled the demands for park development, especially in urban areas, while preserving the natural qualities for which the park had been designated". The English naturalistic landscape architecture style is characterized by naturalistic vistas of grassy hills, large specimen trees and groves, picturesque ponds and streams, winding carriage trails, and wooded areas. "The goal of the Richmond Park Bureau was to establish a naturalistic landscape that afforded visitors a retreat from the City." (City Annual Report, 1918)

The transformation of rural Rosewood into a City Beautiful, Naturalistic Park occurred from 1909 to 1912. Along with the large granite memorial gateway, featuring wrought-iron fencing and large bronze plaques, came the construction of the Gatekeeper's House, and work on the carriage roads, pathways, trees, and groves. Over the next twenty-five years, more construction in this style would occur, with rustic

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picnic shelters, camping and dormitory facilities, more roadways, artistically-designed concrete bridges, and additional landscaping.

There are several other phases of development and construction in Bryan Park to consider:

- Additional development for its use as auto-tourist camp (1921-1930);
- Depression-era work programs and projects (1930-1937); and
- Azalea Gardens (1952-1960s) and other park projects in same period.

The country's economic boom following the end of World War 1 ushered in the next phase of park construction. With renewed automobile construction and greater mobility, Bryan Park was expanded for development as an Auto-Tourist Camp, which was open between 1921 and 1930. In its heyday, due to the real estate and building boom in Florida from 1923 to 1926, the park accommodated over 40,000 visitors annually. The camp was operated by the Park Bureau, and was free of charge for auto-campers. Campers could stay from one night up to the maximum of ten days.

Due to the growing number of visitors to Bryan Park and the need for other facilities such as bathrooms, the Camp House was built in the summer of 1922. The house was equipped with a lobby/library room, which contained an open fireplace, library table and seats. The men and women's bathrooms contained showers and a laundry-tub facility, both providing hot and cold running water, 24 hours a day. "Tourist talk" made auto-camps successful in the 1920's. A well-run camp could win publicity for its town, yet even a well-run camp could become unpopular if another camp offered better conveniences. Thus, the Camp House and Bryan Park were successful attractions.

During this 1920s, additional improvements were made to the grounds. Roads were widened, the lakes were cleaned-up, and an additional road was opened which resulted in a continuous loop around the lake and park. Additional changes took place in 1925, when the Bryan Park Realty Corporation constructed the upper lake and spillway, and in 1929, when a new bridge was built over Princeton Creek.

The 1930s ushered in another phase of development, as a result of City, State, and federal work and assistance programs developed in response to the Great Depression. In 1930, the City began a work program for the unemployed, called the Emergency Unemployment Relief Fund; 37 men were sent to work in Bryan Park. The Virginia Emergency Relief Administration (VERA) and the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) supplemented this program. By 1932, this workforce had grown to an average of 48 workers per day in Bryan Park. In 1935, the Works Progress Administration (WPA) replaced FERA, and WPA workers made extensive improvements in Bryan Park. These WPA projects included the construction of two Shelter #1 and Shelter # 3, comfort stations near the picnic areas, water and sewers, a reinforced-concrete bridge, and a dam/causeway and spillway between the upper and lower ponds. Cobblestone cooking hearths, spall gutters, stormwater management structures, and retaining walls were built, roads were improved, and woods were grubbed. Even the outhouse located behind the Gatekeeper's House was razed and a two-story cobblestone garage was constructed in its place in 1933. Following the wind-down of the WPA workforce in 1937, no additional structures were built in the Park. During the 1940's, the Park Bureau focused on beautification and establishing a tree nursery in the park. Bryan Park was annexed from Henrico County into the City of Richmond in 1942.

The last main phase of Bryan Park's development began in the early 1950's. Robert H. Harvey, the Superintendent of Grounds and Structures for the City of Richmond since the mid-1940s, had tried to start an azalea gardens in Forest Hill Park, but found the growing conditions were inadequate. In 1952, Mr. Harvey resolved to start again, this time in the poorly drained, swampy area of the southern portion of Bryan Park. He arranged for the donation of 5,000 azaleas from the Botanical Garden in the City of

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Norfolk, Virginia, and, as many Richmond residents and gardeners remember, he collected azalea cuttings from throughout the Richmond region. He grew them in a nursery in the park, gradually expanding the gardens to cover more than 17 acres. Water lines and sprinklers were laid during the initial period of construction to provide irrigation for the gardens.

The Bryan Park Azalea Gardens became famous for its 50,000 azaleas. In the center of the Azalea Gardens, Mr. Harvey designed a small, palette-shaped lake with a spray fountain, which was built in 1960 and 1961. The pond, which features cobblestone retaining walls and a center jet fountain, is surrounded by various colored azaleas and features a rustic footbridge over the spillway at the end of the pond. Another nearby feature is a large azalea-bed designed in the form of a 50' x 30' cross of white azaleas, outlined by red azaleas, framed by boxwoods.

Additional construction in the park included picnic Shelter #2 in 1957, and the stabilization (channelization) of Princeton Creek occurred around that time. Five additional stone ovens were built, a drinking fountain was installed, and picnic tables were put in place to serve the visitor's needs.

Joseph Bryan Park is still largely intact, with its rich history and strong sense of place, historic buildings and structures, diverse resources, attractive landscapes, and abundant natural beauty.

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### Maps

Henrico County Plat Book 1:5. Plat of William Young Property, 15 June 1815  
Shows Young's Mill Pond and Mill Structures.

Henrico County Plat Book 5:156. Map Of Westbrook showing the division of the Young Estate, October 2, 1838.

Shows "Young's Spring, marked "spring"...draining into Brook Run (Upham Brook) between Youngs Millpond and Gardner's Mineral Spring.

James Kelly's Map "Smith's Henrico County, VA, 1935.  
Shows Mordecai's Corn & Saw Mill.

Nathaniel Milcher Map, a Union Survey published in 1867.

Shows Mordecai House, small fortifications on and around Rosewood, and part of Richmond's Outer defense Line.

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Continuation Sheet  
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Richmond, VA**

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**Geographical Data****UTM References****Zone 18**

	<b>Easting</b>	<b>Northing</b>
1)	282200	4163960
2)	282120	4162900
3)	281190	4162770
4)	280860	4163400
5)	281280	4163960

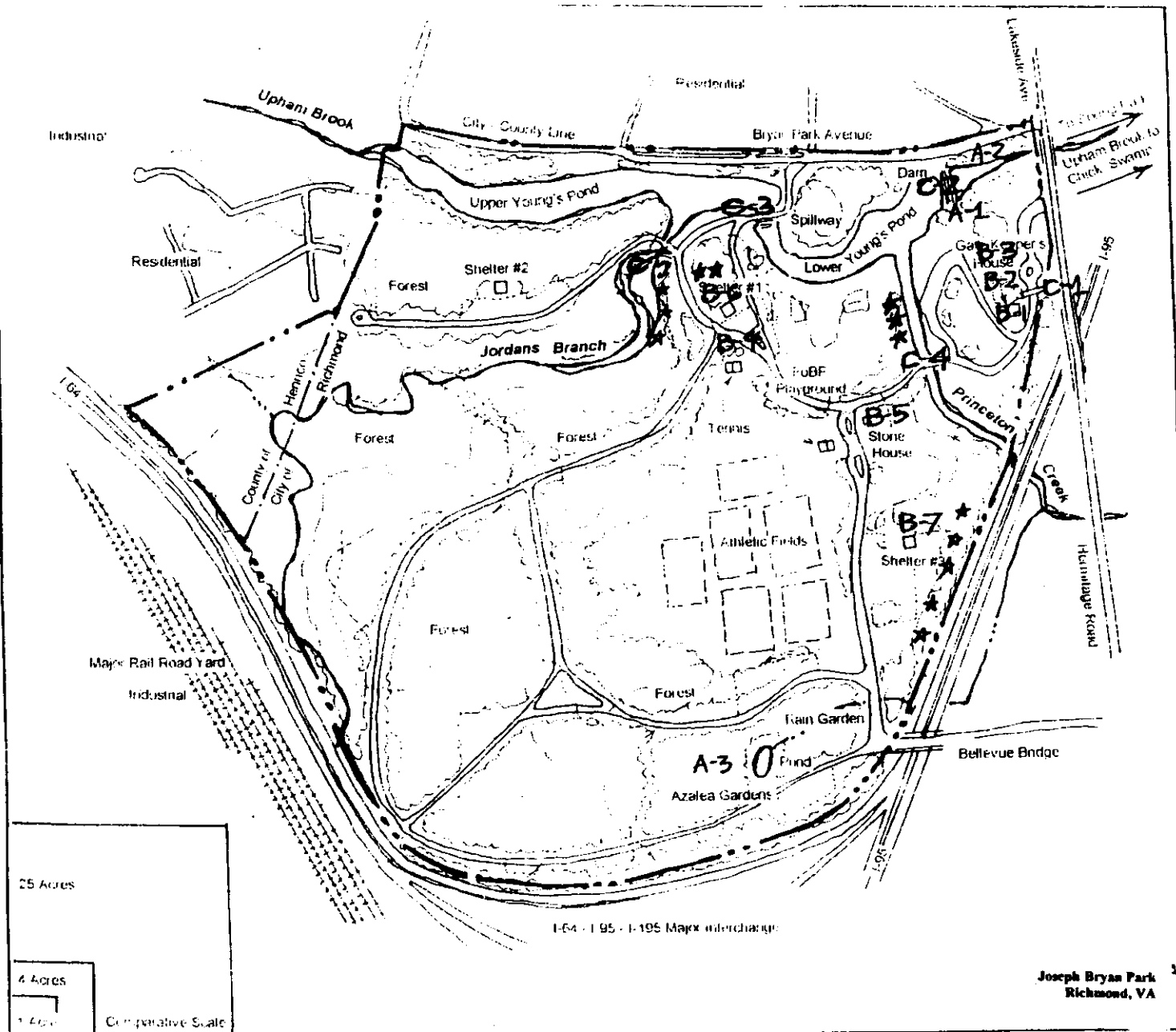
**Verbal Boundary Description**

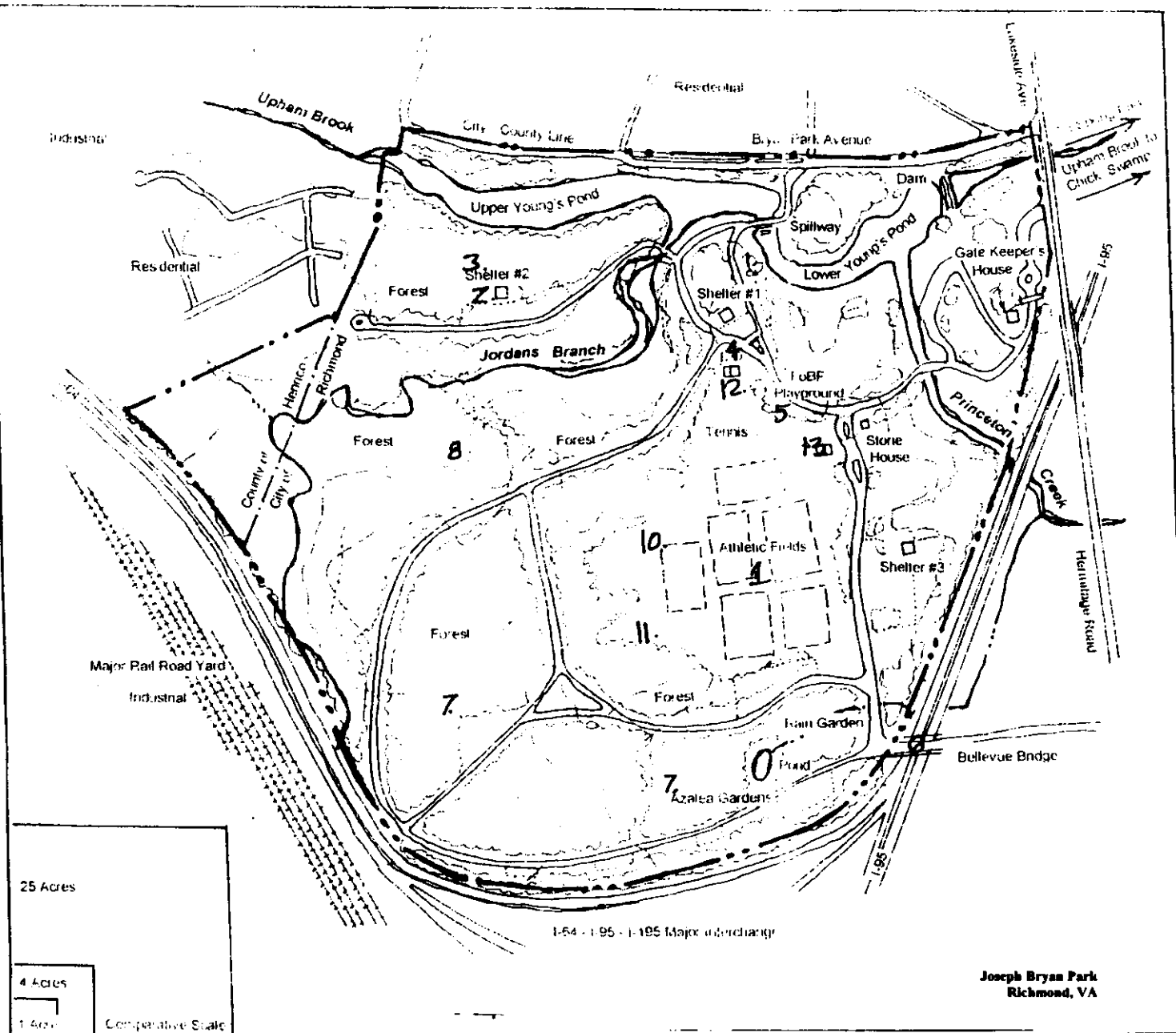
The boundaries of Bryan Park are shown the City of Richmond's Property Inventory Number (PIN) # N17- 250 and Block R 5 / 2.

**Boundary Justification**

The boundaries for the park are consistent with the 1909 Park boundary, shown on the Map of Rosewood drawn by Fontaine Jones, Assistant City Engineer, based on the map by T Crawford Redd & Bros., 1909.







# Joseph Bryan Park, RICHMOND, VA SKETCH MAP B:

## LEGEND

### NON-CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES:

- Sites**
  1. CVSA Soccer Complex
- Buildings**
  2. Shelter #2
  3. Brick bathrooms, Shelter #2
  4. Cinder block bathroom, near Shelter #1
- Structures**
  5. Friends of Bryan Park Playground
  6. Bellevue R-PTA Bridge
  7. Miscellaneous small wood bridges (2)
  8. Boy Scout Fire Pit (1950s, 1960s)
  9. Miscellaneous Brick sidewalks
  10. Meadow Kiosk (2001)
  11. Meadow Observation Mound (2001)
  12. A pair of tennis courts, near Camp House
  13. A pair of tennis courts, near Shelter #1
- Objects**
  14. Harvey Azalea Gardens Memorial Marker

JOSEPH BRYAN PARK  
RICHMOND, VA  
127-5677

UTM References  
Zone 18

Eastings Northings  
1282200 4163960

1282120 4162900

1281190 4162770

1280860 4163100

1281280 4163960

4166000m N.

GLIM SPRINGS (U.S. 522) 26 MI.  
GILVILLE 18 MI.

4162

